

THE EUROPEAN
INFORMATION
SOCIETY GROUP

EURIM



**EURIM Response to the
Cabinet Office consultation paper on
Transformational Government –
Enabled by Technology**

February 2006

Website: <http://www.eurim.org.uk>

The Directors of EURIM are Lord Renwick (President), Margaret Moran MP (Chair), Ian Taylor MBE MP (Vice Chair),
The Earl of Erroll, Malcolm Harbour MEP, Lord McNally and Lord Randall of St Budeaux
EURIM is a Company Limited by Guarantee. Registered in England and Wales No 2816980
Registered Office: 165 Queen Victoria Street, London EC4V 4DD



February 2006

1) Summary: a whole-hearted welcome and a challenge to us all

The successful transformation of the way central government organises delivery is fundamental to ensuring the value of its services to the citizen. The UK has too many initiatives, fragmented across too many departments and agencies. We therefore very much welcome the long overdue change to a holistic citizen-centric approach with technology seen to be on tap, as an enabler, not on top.

- Successful transformation is not a one-off change exercise. It entails involving those in the front line of service delivery and receipt, to help create much better performance monitoring and feedback routines to enable ongoing improvement, targeting those services in most need of improvement and using the channels most likely to reach the recipients.
- There is a need to make full use of the expertise, experience, resources and channels of the “third sector” (voluntary, charitable and other not-for-profit groups) in delivering personalised service to the socially excluded and to recognise that this should be recompensed in full, as for any other professional consultancy of similar relevance and value.
- We support the comments of the ICT professional bodies (BCS, IEE, IMIS etc.) on improving the professionalism of planning and delivery at all levels, from initial policy research, formation and planning, through procurement and implementation to performance monitoring. But “We know why projects fail, we know how to prevent their failure – so why do they still fail?” (Martin Cobb, Treasury Board of Canada, Secretariat). How do we secure good practice from the top down?
- We need to enhance public confidence by reducing duplication of effort and greatly improving accuracy and security with regard to data collection, collation and sharing, with credible and practical routines for guidance, consent and governance in line with current best practice.

EURIM looks forward to working with Cabinet Office to help bring together public and private sectors to identify, publicise and promote good practice in the transformation of government and to help secure the political support that will be necessary to enable the “Customer Group Directors” and “Transformation Board” to steer between Scylla and Charybdis: the risk of creating “a new generation of over-specified, contract-driven public-private, inter-departmental monoliths” and the waste of time and energy that could result from continued fragmentation while we “let a thousand flowers wilt”

2) Background

EURIM is an independent UK-based Parliament-Industry Group dedicated to improving the quality of ICT policy by bringing together users, suppliers, officials and parliamentarians to discuss issues across organisational and political boundaries. EURIM has produced seven briefings on how to ensure that public sector service is not only modernised but “*joined-up from the perspective of the citizen with a choice of “user friendly” interfaces (including the option of personal contact) which put them at the centre. There should be no “wrong portal”; all channels likely to be used by the citizen should cross-refer*”. (EURIM Briefing 37, <http://www.eurim.org.uk/resources/briefings/br29.pdf>).

EURIM has also produced a briefing on the “*need to review approaches to consultation at all levels, not just for primary and secondary legislation and local government*” but also to reflect “*The devolution of powers to un-elected bodies*”. The Introductions and Recommendations from all eight papers are contained in Annex A. We are delighted to see that action on most of the recommendations is either under way or reflected in the Transformational Government agenda.

There is, however, a concern among the ICT professionals employed by our members and observers that “shared services” could be used as the excuse to propose another round of large projects, akin to those whose performance is currently on the agendas of a variety of Select Committees. It is therefore essential that the fundamental savings review, due for publication in June 2006, is used to expedite the movement already under way to learn from private sector good practice and “*reduce risk by moving from ‘big bang’ projects to ‘interoperability frameworks’ for change programmes*”. (EURIM Briefing 37, <http://www.eurim.org.uk/resources/briefings/br37.pdf>)

The emphasis on professionalism in the consultation paper is also most welcome in the light of previous EURIM calls for action to “*Rebuild the public sector skills base at all levels ... with the competences to plan, procure, implement and monitor partnership projects successfully ... Senior civil servants should not be expected to perform roles outside their experience or to supervise contractors to do so unless and until they have received appropriate training.*” (EURIM Briefing 37, <http://www.eurim.org.uk/resources/briefings/br37.pdf>)

Many of those who helped draft the previous EURIM briefings are now actively helping the eGU and OGC with their professionalism agenda, and are understood to be helping others (such as BCS, IMIS and IEE) with submissions that will address these points, which were also well covered in a report on “The Challenges of Complex IT Projects” produced by the Royal Academy of Engineering and the British Computer Society in 2004. We support all the recommendations in that report. The section on “Advice for Senior Management” might well, with minor editing, serve as advice for Ministers. Rather than repeat the excellent material in that report, this submission is therefore focussed on four areas:

- Improving the quality and relevance of consultation processes.
- Involving those with most experience of delivering joined up services.
- Ensuring that better practice is actually followed - at all levels.
- Removing current barriers to shared services.

3) Consulting those in the front-line: recipients, intermediaries and providers

One of the most common causes of failure in major systems (after over-ambition and lack of clarity and realism in setting the original objectives) is failure to engage the human beings whose co-operation is essential to make the new routines work. We therefore welcome the first key action in paragraph 22 “to increase understanding of customer needs and behaviours” and “Systematically engage with citizens, business and front line public servants to understand and then specify the transformational changes which service providers need to meet”.

Internet access has been transformed since EURIM reviewed public sector consultation mechanisms in 2001 but the underlying analysis and recommendations remain valid because most departments and agencies still receive inputs only from current and would-be suppliers and partners when they seek inputs on proposed changes - albeit these are now submitted by e-mail. That briefing highlighted the need to mix “democratic process” and “market research”. Several departments are now conducting long overdue research into how their services are perceived by the recipients and are also consulting their own front line staff to learn why problems occur. The results are “uncomfortable” but look set to lead to major change and potentially dramatic service improvement, within existing budgets.

A major change since 2001 has been the growing sophistication of the on-line consultation techniques used by the private sector to secure feedback that is representative of their target audiences. That becomes easier as Internet usage grows but the techniques commonly used rarely reach the socially excluded or those in “closed communities”. There is a need to apply not only the best of what has been learned from the many e-democracy experiments, but also the techniques used by charities and voluntary groups to obtain the views of those unable or unwilling to respond openly. The latter may be more relevant with regard to obtaining inputs from those in most need of improved contact.

Paragraph 22(a) refers to “learning from best practice already within the public sector, from other governments and from the private sector”. There is a need to identify and publicise the current state of “best practice”, both with regard to identifying needs and monitoring performance to aid the Customer Group Directors and their teams. EURIM would be pleased to work with those tasked to do this.

4) Involving those with most experience of delivering joined up services

The third (voluntary) sector commonly has more experience than most private sector partners or central government agencies of service delivery to those with whom the public sector has most of its dealings: the elderly, sick and socially excluded. Organisations like Citizens Advice Bureaux and Barnados are often the main (and sometimes the only) point of advice and contact for around 4 million of those in most need of public services. Many of those working for them (and similar smaller organisations) are motivated primarily by a desire to serve or “put back” and include senior figures who understand the sensitivities and complexities of public service rather better than some of those advising central government. Those from the private sector often resent calls to be entrepreneurial nearly as much as the bureaucratic and regulatory overheads heaped on volunteers and those working part-time to supplement pensions or disability benefit.

IT can be used to reduce the cost of central government services, but there are much bigger potential savings from using IT to support decentralised services provided by networked community partnerships. This could reduce or eliminate the need for hierarchies of agencies, quangos and trusts, drip-funded by central government to meet the targets of the day. Community partnerships tend to involve not only democratically accountable local government and efficiency motivated local business, but also large numbers of pensioners or benefit recipients, whether as volunteers receiving only expenses or as paid part-timers, delivering community support for our growing numbers of frail and elderly, at affordable cost. Government has recognised the importance of such initiatives by supporting programmes like IT4Communities (3,500 volunteers already registered for a programme that has yet to be publicly launched), which harnesses the experience of many senior ICT professionals as well as those who have retired from the industry. But it is unclear how far that recognition spreads when it comes to tapping their experience to help plan practical delivery at department or agency level.

There are widespread calls for an end to the plethora of special initiatives, beloved of advisors and officials, where the cost of bidding and adjudication often exceeds the funds available, and the time and bureaucracy drains the enthusiasm of even the winners. The best contribution of central government towards encouraging innovation in the delivery of better community services at affordable cost may be to devolve more responsibility for funding and governance to local authorities.

Another problem faced by those charities on which many of the most vulnerable rely is the growing cost of dealing with central and local government. It is not just the Charity Commission or those applying regulations (and fees) designed for paid professionals to unpaid volunteers, but those planning new programmes, wishing to consult or solicit “bids” without paying for the effort entailed. If government really does wish to work with the voluntary sector in transforming the delivery of government, let alone to tap its expertise in cost-effective delivery, it should fund the time spent by charities and the voluntary sector in responding to requests to help consultants and advisors plan forward programmes, or to “bid” for funds, complete returns, prepare for inspections and all the other overheads of dealing with public sector departments, agencies and regulators. There is also a need for government to consider explicitly funding the technological infrastructures necessary for such groups to function as “e-intermediaries”.

This problem is not, of course, confined to charities. It raises the question of how far one-size-fits-all national schemes and regulations are compatible with the delivery of holistic customised citizen-centric services, tailored to meet local needs. As part of the fundamental savings review, departments should examine their regulatory and inspection regimes, including those in the small print of their national delivery programmes, beginning with those which have been said in the past to present obstacles to the practical delivery of low cost, personalised services to those in most need.

5) Ensuring that better practice is actually followed: at all levels

Strategy proposals must recognize the widespread concern over the ability of government and its suppliers to work together in practice to deliver the savings and efficiency improvements expected. UK public sector systems are commonly the biggest and most complex in the world: all nations larger than the UK and most of those of comparable size are federated or decentralised. Paragraph 12 refers to the current dependence on large-scale systems and technology and much of the paper is taken up with the need to improve professionalism in delivery. It is good to note, however, that the paper does not assume the necessity of maintaining the centralised UK approach, with all the problems this has brought.

The Royal Academy of Engineering paper on “The Challenges of Complex IT Projects” quotes a 2003 report indicating that only 16% of UK IT projects were considered successful and a US report claiming success rates up from 16% in 1995 to 34% in 2003. More recent, but less statically valid, research may illuminate why the success rate is rising: it indicates that short duration (under three months) projects have an 80% success rate, those which take more than six months are more likely to be cancelled than to go live and those which take over a year rarely succeed (there were none in the sample used). Almost all private sector change programmes are now broken into short duration, incremental projects. For the “Customer Group Directors” to avoid unnecessary risk and deliver results before 2010, there is a need for ministers to require similar incremental and evolutionary programmes to support citizen-centric delivery by democratically accountable human beings, rather than support inter-departmental negotiations to create a new generation of shared monoliths.

Paragraph 39 (7) talks of rationalised electronic gateways and citizen and business numbers converging towards biometric identity cards and the National Identity Register, with the national insurance number as an index. It has been said by supporters of ID cards that the main problem with current proposals in this area is the unprecedented level of co-operation between departments and agencies that will be necessary to deliver the claimed benefits. An incremental process, focussed on delivering payback at each stage, making use of what is happening in parallel (the roll out of chip and pin, e-borders, ICAO compliant passports, on-line fingerprint systems etc.) would be in line with advice from the ICT profession as to the best way of achieving this.

The private sector approach of “structured evolution” (think big, start small and scale up on success) provides a proven model. Each phase is planned, justified, assessed (including market research to check both requirements and delivery) and tested. Competing suppliers are required to interoperate, changes are priced and recorded, with open partnership and agreed risk sharing. The pieces are in place for government to do likewise: Gateway Review process, e-Gif standards and Framework Contracts, albeit some changes are needed to reduce the overhead on small projects and to ensure good practice is not bypassed with regard to large, complex, high profile, politically-driven proposals.

In particular, there is a balance to be struck between the confidentiality necessary for effective decision-making with candid peer review, and the need for accountability when professional judgement is ignored or over-riden for reasons of pride or policy. Given the current state of public confidence, any case for confidentiality must be balanced against the need to avoid allegations that it serves to conceal incompetence, inefficiency and corruption. It is suggested that such allegations are best countered by reverting to the practices common before claims to confidentiality on commercial grounds (other than during the tendering process itself) became routine.

This leads to four recommendations:

- All central government programmes should pass through the full Gateway process, with comments subsequently available to the National Audit Office and Public Accounts Committee.
- All details of winning bids, including performance monitoring and change control processes, should be placed in the public domain, unless they really do affect national security.
- All political decisions should be recorded, and the recommendations of the Select Committee on Public Administration for a Civil Service Act carried forward.
- Governance regimes and routines similar to those for public servants should apply to all those contracted to carry out statutory functions.

6) Removing current barriers to shared services

The vision behind the consultation paper is most welcome, particularly the reference in Paragraph 8 to using technology to “help ensure that: Citizens and business have choice and personalisation in their interactions with government.” Most citizens wish to be able to deal with government via a single identity and point of contact (e.g. Citizens Advice Bureau, Post Office, Community Centre or Care Worker). A major barrier is that many of those in most contact with government cannot themselves use a conventional keyboard or screen and need assistance (e.g. from a care assistant, advisor or counter clerk). Others in need, such as socially excluded or homeless youngsters, can best be contacted via

their mobile or the e-mails they pick up in the Internet café or Library. Choice should indeed involve “new channels” and “new opportunities for service competition”, but the potential for using new technology to re-equip and re-invigorate existing channels should not be neglected and could lead to even better service and efficiency.

6.1) Using the opportunity to reduce duplication and improve accuracy

The section on the “Current Position” begins (paragraph 10) with the reliance of modern government on “accurate and timely information” and says that “Information sharing, management of identity and of geographical information, and information assurance are therefore crucial”.

A prime obstacle to the current joining-up of Government (national or local) is the belief, true or not, that personal information may not be shared between functions and departments, even when the citizen requests it. The problems are compounded by lack of trust in the accuracy or security of many public sector information databases. Over recent years there has been publicity for error rates of 30% and more in medical, criminal, vehicle and tax records. There has been similar publicity over the insecurity of such records: with the provision of drivers’ addresses to animal rights terrorists, the sale of medical and criminal records, and “re-routing” of tax credits. The problems are not, however, new and the Transformational Government agenda offers the opportunity to address these, provided that the focus is on the root causes and the need to address ‘people processes’, not just the technology.

Thirty years ago, a major comparison of local authority and utility billing systems undertaken to help plan systems for the Regional Water Authorities found that residential churn rates (for billing/rating purposes) ranged from under 2.5% (leafy suburbs) to over 400% p.a. (inner city rented accommodation). A EURIM-funded exercise last year to look at the causes of low voter turn-out indicated that the churn rate in the leafy suburbs is now significantly higher, while staff cuts and reliance on technology rather than physical visits has produced a situation in which the accuracy of most public sector address files is now significantly lower than in the 1970s. Thus, for some wards, a majority of those on the electoral register no longer lived in the area, while many current residents were not on the register. Meanwhile the multiplicity of public sector address files (over 70 in one local authority alone were identified in the course of the exercise) meant that attempts to notify a change of address, or to correct errors, were “problematical”. Recent attempts to route social services and other payments through banks instead of Post Offices have also highlighted the number of those with no fixed abode: although whether this is growing or shrinking is less clear.

Private sector experience has long acknowledged that unless data files are regularly updated by those who have a vested interest in their accuracy, data quality deteriorates at about 10% per annum. One-off exercises, such as the creation of a new database, rarely address the problem. The best approach is to create opportunities to validate records on a rolling basis. The most accurate address files are, therefore, those of the Post Office, the utilities and those maintained by the banks to send documentation that they do not permit to be forwarded by the Post Office. These lists (and other sources) are all routinely collated by the main credit reference agencies.

6.2) Using the opportunity to improve security when and where it is needed

Residents should have both the ability to ensure that their records are accurate, and the opportunity to make corrections in such a way that these can be readily checked. In a recent debate on ID cards, the Minister stated *“updates of addresses will be both easy and secure. There will be a variety of methods to update an address on the national identity register, including over the Internet, by telephone or in writing. But in each case, in order to protect individuals from bogus attempts to change their address details, there would need to be a validation of identity. The identity card scheme is currently investigating the most secure method of conducting such remote transactions, including the use of methods involving one-time passwords, which would provide much greater assurance than traditional passwords”*. The private sector has yet to find a way of updating address records that is both “easy and secure”. What they commonly have are routines that reduce the financial risks to which they are exposed by balancing the risk of loss of business against the risk of fraud: i.e. easy but insecure when the risk of serious loss through theft/fraud is low, and secure but not easy when the risk is high.

The private sector has clear routines for sharing the cost of validating information (e.g. via the credit reference agencies) or passing information between organizations on a trusted basis (e.g. the Identrus and Twist standards developed by the banks and others). The latter, however, commonly depend on the acceptance of contractual liability when problems arise, and also on “deperimeterisation” (alias secure authenticated communication between named individuals within the organizations concerned).

The latter also entails the use of rings, as well as hierarchies, of trust, so as to actively prevent staff access to information they have no need to know.

Current proposals for the security of public sector systems that may be accessed by very large numbers of staff (hundred of thousands in the case of medical records), raise concerns that they appear to require all users to follow procedures rather better than the radio operators of the Luftwaffe and Wehrmacht in World War 2 (whose security breaches greatly shortened the time necessary to break the Enigma Codes whenever these were changed). There is a need to ensure that the confidentiality structures and routines applied to systems used by large numbers of staff are built around the way human beings behave, not just technologies and processes designed for high security environments. Is the NHS administrator who changes her passwords to the names of her grandchildren so that she can remember them following better practice than the senior consultant who follows the password rules but has to use a notebook to remember them all?

Industry members of EURIM with professional backgrounds in computer security have expressed concern over the statement in Para 39 (7) that "government will create an holistic approach to identity management ... rationalise electronic gateways and citizen and business record numbers ... converge towards biometric identity cards and the National Identity Register ... making wider use of the national insurance number to index citizen records as a transition path towards an identity card." It is also said that nations like the US and Canada are moving away from tokens linked to a single reference. Others say "federated" approaches are unproven outside small to medium sized applications and financial services ("a special case") and the holistic approach is the correct way forward, provided there is widespread and thorough examination of the practical and legal issues, learning from experience to date, both public and private, UK and overseas.

Either way there is a view that secure sharing is not compatible with a large number of people having common access to a database. There is a need for realistic debate on the trade-offs between ease of access and security. If security is important there should be a need to cross Chinese walls to reach a human being who can give you access - once they have been convinced that you have the need and authority. If that level of security is not needed, then access and updating can be made much easier, but confidentiality and accuracy cannot be relied on.

The security or otherwise of large systems (whether public or private) is commonly debated behind closed doors but recent scandals make open, albeit perhaps multi-layered, debate essential. This is an area where the EURIM personal identity and e-crime groups could assist those responsible for "considering the practical and legal issues" by identifying examples of the different approaches and experiences to date with live operation (including how errors and abuses are handled) and organising better informed debate on the choices currently available.

6.3) Using the opportunity to improve both Governance and Guidance

There is currently a tangled web of powers to demand information from the public and from business for regulatory and investigatory purposes. Some powers date back to the emergency controls in World War 2, but the web has proliferated since. The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act covers only that subset related to communications and covert surveillance.

There is similar confusion with regard to the governance of publicly held information, with strong penalties for abuse by those in some departments and agencies but not others, such as contractors and temporary staff, who commonly enter or retrieve sensitive data.. The sorry state of affairs revealed by the Bichard enquiry is repeated across much of Central and Local Government, and lies behind the mix of support and scepticism with regard to ID Cards. The Department of Transport clerk who gave the names and addresses of those whose cars had been seen going into a guinea pig farm to animal rights activists was jailed for malfeasance in public office. That was only possible because he was an established civil servant. Those found guilty after Operation Glade for selling information obtained from medical and criminal records files did not receive custodial sentences. The proposal to update the Computer Misuse Act as part of the new Police and Justice Bill is excellent news, but it is unclear whether it will adequately address this problem. If not, the opportunity should be taken to do so.

Meanwhile those responsible for responding to requests for information rarely have easy access to clear guidance as to what should be passed to whom, under what circumstances, let alone how they should check the authority and identity of those contacting them. In many cases it is unclear who should provide that guidance, especially where there are conflicting legal requirements to be resolved in a supposedly emergency situation.

Equally seriously, it is apparent that current processes for information assurance and governance are fragmented and uneven, and do not prevent public sector information files from being used to enable identity theft, fraud and other criminal activities. There are serious allegations that guidance from governments' own security advisors and systems suppliers is often ignored.

Paragraph 39 (6) is most welcome, but a simple tiered model is inadequate for the complexities of information sharing needed to deliver citizen- and business-centred services when, where and how these are needed. There is also a need for routines for taking action with regard to those who require their providers and partners to follow unprofessional practice.

The public sector is responsible for a large part of the ICT education and training infrastructure, and is also as such a major employer. The statement therefore that the Government "will also play its part in promoting confidence by leading a public/private campaign on Internet safety" is particularly welcome. All Government Departments should be required to follow good private sector practice, and organise basic Internet Safety and Electronic Security training for all who use their on-line systems. It is also important that an announcement on the future of Government support for the "Get Safe On Line" programme be made before the current host, the National High Tech Crime Unit is absorbed into SOCA.

6.4) Using the opportunity to distil and enforce better practice

Despite the supposed barriers, there appears to be a large number of data sharing initiatives across central and local government. The objectives vary, the quality is uneven and few of those responsible are aware of what is being done elsewhere, e.g. with the use of common sources to routinely update the files of those who are not themselves permitted to share data.

There is an urgent need to survey what is already happening and distil good practice, advice and guidance from successful public sector models. In the longer term there is also a need to learn from the private sector, especially with regard to sharing between those who do not trust each other and whose systems are under regular attack. The Identrus and Twist standards and processes, developed initially by a consortium of banks and now available to others, including the public sector, are an example. These require the acceptance of liability, and there has to be a question as to whether those who cannot or will not accept liability can be trusted. This may, therefore, limit the applicability of private sector models to information sharing. It may also limit the degree to which genuine public-private partnerships can be established. Given the pressure to achieve results and the poor track record of delivery of large or complex public sector systems, there is a need for rolling programmes of incremental sharing, following the best practice disciplines of structured evolution described earlier: think big (basic principles and interoperability frameworks), start small (linking departmental and agency systems on a bottom up basis) and build on success (scaling and linking that which works).

6.5) The need for compulsion may indicate it is a bad idea

The Prime Minister's forward to the consultation states clearly that "The future of public services has to use technology to give citizens choice, with personalized services designed round *their* needs not the needs of the provider"

That is a major challenge to those in the public sector to whom the concept of choice is alien: activities are either compulsory or forbidden, according to the statutory instruments. This applies especially to attitudes to data sharing. There are also cases where choice may not be appropriate (as with law enforcement or taxation). Politicians are similarly used to compulsion when it comes to bringing about change in the public sector: they rarely allow officials to have a choice.

The State of California is roughly the same size and population as the United Kingdom and has a similar track record with regard to public sector systems. When the Officers of the Parliamentary Information Technology Committee visited Sacramento in May 2000 they were told that the new aim was to copy only what had already been done successfully elsewhere. Plans at State and City level entailed sharing power and involving business and consumer groups in the disciplines of change. But they also required winning the hearts and minds of public servants in office for 30 to 40 years, delivering service, while political appointees came and went. The task was to open new methods of doing business while not forcing citizens to jump new hurdles. That meant defining strategy and success factors while actively encouraging integration, so the new portals were not just "lipstick on the face of a pig".

In the Prime Minister's speech to the National Policy Forum, quoted at the start of the consultation paper, he refers to the need to "open up the system" and "break down the monoliths". We need to ensure that a genuine focus on choice makes it much harder for "rationalization" and "efficiency" to be used as the excuse for the creation of a new generation of equally inefficient, but shared, monoliths, whether public, private or shared. In that context bottom-up proposals from departments and agencies (local and well as central) as to who **they** feel best able to share with, and how, have at least as much value as those from central government and incumbent service providers.

That entails using the best of "e-democracy" practice to consult those who deal regularly with government and those in the front line of service delivery as to what is needed and how it might be organised. There is then a need to make effective use of the technology itself to track not only nominal performance but user satisfaction: remembering the two types of user, those using the technology to help them deliver a service and those using it to access a service (see also Section 3 above).

6.6) Suggested Principles for Transforming Information Sharing and Assurance

In order to achieve its targets, the Transformational Government agenda needs to adopt six core principles:

- Enable departments and agencies to adopt consent-driven routines wherever possible, akin to those for the files of the credit reference agencies and financial services sector, while retaining default powers to demand information for emergency or law enforcement purposes.
- Extend good practice, third party governance and mandatory training, as required in the Regulation of Investigatory Powers legislation, to cover *all* statutory powers that demand information from business or the public.
- Provide clear guidance to all those handling public sector personal information as to whom it is to be shared with, under what circumstances and how to check their identity/authority. This is also needed by those in the private sector from whom information may be required under statutory powers.
- Impose graded and publicised penalties for personal or organisational abuse. This should apply to individuals accessing or amending files to aid impersonation, fraud or blackmail through organised abuse or bad practice, and also where there is a lack of guidance and procedures.
- Assess the risks and liabilities associated with the various trust and governance models (current and proposed), how these vary with changing business requirements and technical processes, and the effects of volume and required response times.

The programme also needs to include:

- Rolling departmental programmes of file cleaning and validation. These should not be one-off exercises and should be used to bring files and processes together over time.
- A review process to ensure that the many governance and sharing proposals really do give additional protection and achieve economies of scale.

The EURIM Personal Identity and Data Sharing Group currently (January 2006) has 41 Corporate and Associate members (including most of the main ICT suppliers to government), 33 observers (including the programme and policy staff responsible for most of the main information sharing programmes in central government), 16 prospective members and partners and five parliamentary members. Some organisations have more than one representative and the total number of individuals on the circulation list is 207. The EURIM E-Crime group, which has also looked at the security issues in this area, has a similar membership, although the individual representatives from industry and observers from government are different and the total number of individuals is slightly less at 186.

Both groups would be pleased to help Government look at the issues of sharing and security in more detail, particularly with a view to helping share good practice across public and private sectors.

**ANNEX TO RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION
ON TRANSFORMATIONAL GOVERNMENT**

FEBRUARY 2006

EURIM: MODERNISING GOVERNMENT BRIEFINGS

SUMMARIES AND INTRODUCTIONS

BR 29	Oct 00	A Shock to The System – Joined Up Electronic Government
BR 30	Jul 01	Making a Reality of Consultation
BR 31	Jul 01	Integrating Service Delivery: National and Local
BR 32	Jul 01	Change Management for e-Whitehall - Delivering change in the public sector
BR 33	Jan 02	The Critical Success Factor: Delivering Modernised Government through Programme Management
BR 35	Sep 02	Modernising Government: Time for the Next Steps
BR 36	Sep 02	Interoperability – Joined Up Government Needs Joined Up Systems
BR 37	Sep 02	Making IT Work – The Pre-Conditions for Public Sector Systems Success

The full texts of these Briefings are available at:
<http://www.eurim.org.uk/resources/briefings/briefings.php>

In the area of Information Society Technologies, EURIM is a link between Commerce and Industry Parliamentarians, Whitehall and Brussels.



A Shock to the System - Joined Up Electronic Government

Introduction

In April 2000 the UK Government published its e-government strategy setting out the timetables and responsibilities for implementing the objectives of the March 1999 Modernising Government White Paper. In response to the views of industry and others, HMG has advanced to 2005 the target for the on-line availability of all government services capable of electronic delivery to the citizen. This can only be achieved by building on the best of private sector achievements and learning from success (and failure) elsewhere in the world. The means used must be those that best meet citizens' needs and join up communities, as targeted in the "National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal" consultation paper from the Social Exclusion Unit of the Cabinet Office in May 2000.

The earlier White Paper stated that "The Government must bring about a fundamental change in the way we use IT". The principal obstacle is widely seen to be the lack of leadership to bring about a change in public sector thinking and attitudes. The incentive is huge savings in administrative costs, even if on-line communications are in parallel with existing methods. Another driver is the political imperative to provide better communications between individuals, business and government. However, a pre-condition for success is that those in the public sector who are to be retrained and reorganised are enthusiastic and believe the changes will indeed improve the service provided to the citizen. Moreover, improving services in areas where demand is infinite does not cut costs.

Recommendations

1. "Silo" mentalities and rivalries must be overcome, using departmental e-government strategies as a catalyst. This will require collective leadership, particularly from the Information Age government champions and permanent secretaries, not just the e-envoy.
2. Inter-departmental task groups to address policy objectives should be a mainstream way of addressing needs, not an exception. Career structures and training facilities need to encourage, facilitate and reward cross-departmental working.
3. Government must be joined-up from the perspective of the citizen with a choice of "user friendly" interfaces (including the option of personal contact) which put them at the centre. There should be no "wrong portal"; all channels likely to be used by the citizen should cross-refer.
4. The Office of Government Commerce should ensure that procurement processes encourage the integration of strategies across shared infrastructures at the same time as securing value for money in meeting objectives.
5. Open industry standards should be used for all new systems (especially for smart card applications and interfaces between departmental systems) both to avoid fragmentation and to facilitate future partnership and information sharing.
6. The Data Protection Commissioner should be given the role of policing the sharing of personal information between departments and applications. The penalties for abuse need review alongside the responsibilities of those with access.
7. HMG should identify and replicate the successes of other governments and learn from the private sector, especially in the effective thorough implementation and continued monitoring of improved service levels

Making a Reality of Consultation

Introduction

In recent years there has been a significant and welcome increase in the extent to which government consults individuals and organisations on policy proposals and decisions. Within the Modernising Government agenda, there is evidence of a serious wish to improve the methods used. The main driving force appears to be a growing tendency to respond to the uncertainties of change by seeking framework legislation which leaves Secretaries of State to devise regulations and codes of conduct. Many EU Directives are similarly implemented by regulation. The devolution of powers to un-elected bodies (including industry regulators) also entails a need to review approaches to consultation at all levels, not just for primary and secondary legislation and local government.

The quality of current consultation exercises varies and the shortcomings of some of the consequent regulatory impact assessments are such that the National Audit Office is about to embark on a study. Some departments still appear to consult because they have to, rather than because they want to and many non-departmental public bodies are not required to consult at all. Attempts to coordinate consultation exercises between departments and agencies appear limited and there is a growing problem of consultation overload for those organisations and individuals asked to respond to multiple exercises on similar subjects.

Recognising the increasing burden of consultation on the ICT industries, EURIM two years ago produced a Briefing Paper which examined the issues in a European context. This paper reviews the situation in the UK, relating to both central and local government. We examine how the consultation process could be made more effective, more manageable and more likely to leave people feeling that their views have been taken into account.

Recommendations

1. Open, public and published consultation processes should be mandatory for all organisations with powers devolved from Parliament or other directly elected assemblies.
2. The current Cabinet Office guidance, identifying which proposals and decisions should be subject to consultation, should be strengthened and extended and be monitored by the Select Committee on Public Administration.
3. All consultation exercises and their results should be made available to the relevant Select Committee and other elected representatives (MPs, MSPs, Councillors etc).
4. Select Committees might also wish to consider taking active oversight of specific consultation exercises.
5. There should be easy access to all documents via the *UK online* website (and avoiding the use of lengthy URLs). Their existence should be drawn to the attention of all interested groups and individuals as well as through the press. Publicity should also be given to the outcome of consultations, including the effect of responses on that outcome.
6. Consultation documents should be drafted in plain language and be candid about the objectives of the exercise. They should state clearly whether the consultation is about ends or means. Wherever possible the focus should be on ends.
7. Consultation costs should be fully budgeted for any policy initiative and take into account the risk that not consulting effectively may lead to wasted spend and ineffective or counter-productive policy. Thought should also be given to the costs incurred by those who respond.
8. Departments should be encouraged to share consultations and results. Wherever practicable they should co-ordinate plans for consultation exercises to minimise the burden on respondents.
9. All departments and agencies should produce annual forecasts of the consultation exercises they expect to carry out (including estimated timetables) so those likely to be affected can plan the work needed to provide an effective response. Only in exceptional circumstances should consultations be carried out if they are not on the list.

Integrating Service Delivery: National and Local

Introduction

Modernisation is a major challenge for Government at national and local levels. Ambitious and far-reaching targets have been set for providing services online, primarily through the Internet. Merely enabling citizens to access existing government systems is not, however, sufficient. The Modernising Government programme will be effective only if there is a permanent improvement in the way in which the public sector operates, with the use of technology as an important tool, not an end in itself.

Integrating Service Delivery is key to achieving modernisation targets and, more importantly, gaining real benefits for the organisation itself. A EURIM working group focused on the key areas of "integrating" different government organisations to deliver services, and alternative methods of service delivery. This paper reflects the discussions and recommendations emerging from their series of workshops.

Recommendations

- 1 The real objective of Modernising Government across all levels: central, regional and local, is to improve service to the public. The focus should be on the quality and relevance of service.
- 2 Targets for the electronic delivery of services should be adjusted to place greater emphasis on the needs of individuals, operational practicalities (eg ease of use of systems) and recognition that there will always be those who for physical or other reasons require the help of another person to access screen and keyboard-based services.
- 3 The Office of the E-envoy should develop and implement a coherent channel strategy, including non-electronic access where appropriate. The use of intermediaries will be key to achieving this.
- 4 Ministers inevitably look at the short term – 4 to 5 year cycles are inherent in the political process. The government must be encouraged to take the long-term view.
- 5 Public sector financial rules should continue to be reviewed to make it easier to plan more than a year ahead and to fund opportunities for change. Annual budgeting does not facilitate step change. The current split between revenue and capital does not facilitate incremental change.
- 6 Recent evidence shows that "ring-fenced" funding for projects which meet clearly defined standards can be successful in encouraging the kind of innovative thinking needed to modernise government. Steps should be taken to expand current provision, whilst paying due regard to the need to identify forward funding for successful projects.
- 7 Peer review on a cross-departmental basis for setting objectives and monitoring progress should be encouraged. It can be an effective and inexpensive means of breaking down a 'silo' mentality.
- 8 The National Audit Office should be required to take evidence on joint/collaborative working and consumer focus as part of their auditing process.
- 9 Officials need to be given the means and incentives to think about their work in different ways and to use a wider range of skills (including those of professional procurement). This requires the design of new education and training programmes and appropriate rewards, financial or otherwise, for those who are innovative. Penalties imposed on individuals whose ideas subsequently fail do not encourage innovation.
- 10 The public sector should be encouraged to second their staff to prospective private sector suppliers and partners. This will enhance the public sector understanding of motivation, methods, and constraints within the private sector.



Change Management for e-Whitehall Delivering change in the public sector

Summary

Delivery of government services electronically implies far more than simply automating existing practices. It requires a fundamental behavioural transformation. The move to e-government comprises a change to citizen-centric working and accountability. Therefore government must adopt a marketing approach to working and delivery to meet the increased expectations of citizens and to ensure the competitiveness of UK plc in a global marketplace.

E-government constitutes a major challenge to the Civil Service, which is responsible for delivery of both government policy and services. Civil Service procedures were successful in yesterday's more static society. Applying them in today's era of rapid change risks government being superseded by alternative services and models.

How Can this Transformation be Achieved?

Drastic change cannot be effected successfully without strong leadership and compelling motivation. In the private sector, motivation has usually taken the form of a major threat to survival. In the public sector, ICT can be seen as both threat and driver for change because it permits groups to bypass government functions.

The following procedures must be adopted by the Civil Service to achieve the required transformation:-

- The most senior politicians and officials responsible for change must personally and repeatedly identify themselves with that project and with the measurable outcomes its success will generate.
- Goals must be clearly defined, with progress towards them measured regularly and objectively and the findings published.
- Role models and champions should be more widely used throughout organisations.
- Lessons from other private sector restructurings should be exploited.
- Internally, departmental boundaries must be broken down so that delivery is focused around the citizen, not the administrative structure.
- Externally, collaboration with other bodies and staff movement between civil service and agencies/private sector should be increased.

Barriers

- Absence of motivation for change in the form of perceived major threats.
- Traditional focus is on administrative process rather than the end user.
- Failure to encourage and reward innovation are part of Civil Service culture, so there is no incentive to seek new solutions or take any risks.
- Politically motivated premature publicity creates initiative fatigue and puts undue pressure on pilot projects to succeed at all costs.
- Excessive delegation dissociates those in top positions from the change in behaviour they are trying to achieve among their subordinates.
- Treasury funding mechanisms effectively control business planning within the outdated silo structure.

The Critical Success Factor: Delivering Modernised Government through Programme Management

Introduction

Radical changes in the management and procurement of delivery programmes are essential for Government to achieve its public service targets for 2005.

The agenda set out by the present Government for Modernising Government¹ and improving services in Health, Justice, Welfare, Education and Transport is the most challenging public sector change programme ever undertaken in the UK. High-level objectives for Modernising Government are defined in the white paper of 1999¹: to make interaction between government and the public easier, improve service and enhance the standing of public service, but the detailed roadmap of how to get there and who is responsible is not clear.

Programme Management is the method by which hundreds of individual change and investment projects can be coordinated to deliver maximum benefit. It is widely recognised as essential for controlling this type of activity and is supported by the Office of Government Commerce (OGC). However, while there is general agreement about how change should be managed, this is not happening at the working level, suggesting that the likely outcome will be a large cost with little benefit. The problem seems to be particularly acute in central government, while many local authorities are making significant progress.

Bringing about organisational and behavioural change is particularly difficult and planned benefits often fail to materialise because projects focus on delivering computers or software, while the benefits arise from the way they are used. Programme Management provides a coordinated view, enabling risk to be balanced and managed across the portfolio and delivery of benefits to be achieved.

Recommendations

The realisation of Modernising Government hinges on actions that fall within the remit of OGC and individual departments (with support from OGC), Cabinet Office, National Audit Office and the Public Accounts Committee.

1. A complete list of high value projects across the public sector should be published, showing how each relates to the overall policy and to other projects, with quantitative outcomes.
2. The recommendations of the *Successful IT: Modernising Government in Action* report² and OGC best practice must be joined up into a coherent, understandable approach that can be applied in practice.
3. This should include the specification, measurement and reporting of objectives and should be mandated for public and private sector use on all government programmes.
4. Training in these areas should be a prerequisite for appointment as project or programme manager on such work.
5. Programme Managers with the requisite experience and skill set must be developed by cooperation between industry and the public sector.
6. Senior Responsible Owners (SRO) must be selected on ability (leadership, programme experience and influential skills) not grade; be involved from initiation of the programmes and give the role top priority and adequate time.
7. Programmes must be managed in a no-blame culture in which decisiveness and managed risks are encouraged, with rewards linked to achievement.
8. The contractual framework within which industry and government work together on change programmes must emphasise outcomes and value rather than cost and volume.



Modernising Government: Time for the Next Steps

Introduction

2005 is now not far away, and it is possible that the current targets for e-Government could be delivered without achieving the objectives of Modernising Government or any practical benefit at all for the citizen. The critical issues are around setting appropriate targets and expectations for quality of service, the organisation and skills (including Project and Programme Management) of the departments that must deliver and the relationship with the citizen. This paper forms part of a set of three briefings that address these issues, together with ensuring that we do not repeat the mistakes of the past (Briefing 37 – Making IT Work) and interoperability of systems across departments, programmes and functions (Briefing 36 – Interoperability).

Modernising Government is a huge change programme on an unprecedented scale: Health, Education, Criminal Justice and Transport involve in excess of two million people in the delivery of services. Delivering real change involves new working practices, business processes, communications styles and service culture in central government departments, non-departmental public bodies (NDPB), Local Authorities and suppliers. These organisations have a mixed track record of change and the application of technology, making this exercise very high-risk. Historically, 60-70% of much smaller change programmes fail to deliver any business benefits.

This is clearly recognised by Government bodies, such as the Office of Government Commerce, Centre for Management and Policy Studies, National Audit Office, Office of the e-Envoy and the Performance and Innovation Unit (now part of the Cabinet Office Strategy Unit), that have been set up to drive the programme. A range of initiatives is increasing chances of success and EURIM is very supportive of these actions.

The e-Envoy is tasked to ensure that all Government services are available online and that everyone who wants it has access to the Internet. By the end of this year the UK is targeted to be the best environment in the world for e-commerce. These e-targets have served an important purpose in focusing attention on ICT infrastructure. It is now time for a new phase of the programme to address the real issues around service levels and benefits to the citizen and removing the barriers to achieving these.

Recommendations

Cultural and Organisational

1. The Cabinet Office should proactively develop the culture of the Civil Service which, together with NDPBs and Local Authorities, must adapt to embrace change, manage ambiguity, focus on delivery and put the customer, whether citizen or business, first. Organisational structures, authorities and responsibilities must be designed to enable cross-cutting change programmes to be delivered and cross-functional services to be provided in a customer centric fashion.
2. Radical change will involve risk-taking and the occasional glitch. Public watchdogs and Parliamentary members and committees should acknowledge the risk/reward trade-off in their scrutiny of change programmes.

Targets and performance measures

3. Those responsible for delivery of the modernisation programmes should identify the top 5% services for first attention on the basis of

need/benefits that can be delivered and focus on early benefits.

4. Realistic service and benefit targets must be set, with timescales for improvements in speed, accuracy, accessibility, choice and convenience. The emphasis should be on rapid delivery of each service to realise benefits and test efficacy and demand. 2005 might be a realistic target for delivering the top priority 5% of services and 2010 for the top 20%.

Take up

5. Put in place take up strategies (including promotion, social inclusion and accessibility) and targets to ensure that the above service benefits are delivered to the citizen in a compelling way and at an acceptable cost to the taxpayer. Roll-out programmes must be responsive and adapt to early experiences of take-up through customer research and proof of concept.



September 2002

Interoperability - Joined Up Government Needs Joined Up Systems

Introduction

The Modernising Government White Paper of 1999 lists an ambitious set of reforms aimed at implementing 'joined-up government in action', and includes the specific target of making all dealings with government available electronically by 2005. Getting computer systems to work well together is difficult and failure to do so presents one of the biggest single threats to achieving the Modernising Government agenda. Properly interoperating computer systems, both within government organisations and between them and the private sector would, however, make a major contribution to realising these intentions.

This briefing paper outlines some of the factors involved in getting computer systems to interoperate and shows that, rather than being purely technical issues, they are fundamentally issues of management structure and policy. Interoperability is therefore an area in which informed policy makers can make a real, and positive, impact on achieving the government's targets and in building a new government culture. Conversely, in the absence of clued-up decision making, 'joined up government' initiatives are doomed to eventual failure.

Recommendations

- Make interoperability a deliverable for all information and communications projects, not an add-on.
- Do not allow IT suppliers to see interoperability as someone else's problem.
- Ensure that the following recommendations are integral to any new system, project, programme or contract:

Managerial

1. Accompany technical frameworks with administrative frameworks.

In the absence of an effective administrative framework, interoperating systems will fall apart when they hit problems, no matter how good they are at the ICT nuts and bolts level.

- Accountability should be absolutely clear.
- Ownership of systems must come with a responsibility to see them used; systems and data should be treated as assets whose value to the citizen should be maximised.
- Share the benefits equitably. The benefits of interoperability are often asymmetrical.

Technical

1. Define technical architectures at a high level in terms of frameworks.

Over-specification is a recipe for failure over the long term, even if it can mean success in the short term.

- Don't get bogged down in unnecessary detail.

- Accept that interoperation is a brown-field exercise; a 'mixed economy' is inevitable.
- 2. Embrace and enforce standards that actively ease interoperability issues.
 - Mandate open standards.
 - Accept de-facto standards as they emerge.
 - Use the e-GIF standards; when things change, get them updated, don't abandon them.
- 3. Accompany interface standards with data management standards.

The government is taking steps with regard to the management of personal data. Proper consideration of other types of data is needed as well if interoperability is to work.

 - Data management standards – ownership, security, quality, sourcing - are as critical as interface standards – format, protocols, and process.

September 2002

Making IT Work The Pre-Conditions For Public Sector Systems Success

Introduction

The UK Government has embarked on an unprecedented level of ICT spend to help achieve its 2005 targets for Modernising Government, including Health, Education, Law and Order, Transport and Housing, but this is only part of much bigger changes in business practice. To reduce the risk of failure there are major initiatives to improve public sector programme management and the planning and procurement of large projects. These include the Office of Government Commerce Gateway Review system, changes to the NHSIA (National Health Service Information Authority), the creation of the CMPS (Centre for Management & Policy Studies) and OPSR (Office of Public Sector Reform), IPPD (Improving Programme and Project Delivery), SPRITE and the Senior IT Forum (joint with suppliers).

For these to succeed they need the sustained support of politicians, officials and suppliers who are committed to working together to reduce the risk inherent in large projects for organisations whose structures, let alone objectives, may well change before implementation is complete. This entails change to the way objectives are set and policies formed and announced, not just how they are implemented. It requires cultural change on the part of politicians and suppliers, not just officials (see EURIM Briefing 35 – Modernising Government: Time for the Next Steps). The suppliers must be in the business of long term delivery partnerships, including open standards and interoperability (contractual and managerial as well as technical - see EURIM Briefing 36: Interoperability) - not short term profits, proprietary lock-ins, complex performance measures and inflexible terms and conditions. We need to learn from fifty years of computer assisted change why good practice has not been followed in the past, is not being followed in many current projects and may again be bypassed to meet supposed political imperatives in the future. If we do not, another generation of expensively consulted and procured "partnership" systems will collapse around us and the electorate will take its revenge on those they perceive to be responsible - suppliers as well as officials and ministers.

Recommendations

1. Replace the culture of blame avoidance and cover-up followed by witch-hunt by one of risk management with recognition and reward for delivery of outcomes. (See EURIM Briefing 33) This will only be achieved when the National Audit Office, Audit Commission and Public Accounts Committee report as much on success as on failure.
2. Reduce risk by moving from "big bang" projects to "interoperability frameworks" for change programmes, with small "proof of concept demonstrators" which can be thoroughly tested for scalability and applicability (one size will rarely fit all) before mass roll-out. This will entail major change to procurement routines and timescales.
3. Ministers should agree and announce programme objectives but should not announce which "demonstrators" will be rolled out regionally or nationally until they are known to work.
3. Rebuild the public sector skills base at all levels (not just the top) with the competences to plan, procure, implement and monitor partnership projects successfully. The current level and volume of training is commendable but there is also a need to provide practical experience (including of shared service delivery). Senior civil servants should not be expected to perform roles outside their experience or to supervise contractors to do so unless and until they have received appropriate training.